



CAREER MATTERS

VOLUME 1, NUMBER 1, JANUARY 2001



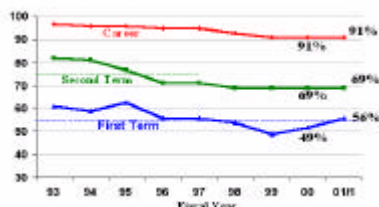
U.S. AIR FORCE

COMMANDERS' NOTAM 01-1

CSAF - General Ryan

Retention of our experienced and professional force is a major concern for our Air Force, and has been a challenge for some time. This chart shows our past and present retention figures compared to our three enlisted retention targets: 95 percent for our career airmen, 75 percent for second-term airmen, and 55 percent for first-term airmen. As you can see, with the exception of a recent upturn in first-term retention, we have been at or below our targets for several years. This means we are not retaining enough of our skilled enlisted members to sustain the force. This translates directly into mission capability.

TABLE 1. Enlisted Retention



As a result, we convened a second Retention Summit to explore initiatives to help win this retention battle. The Career Assistance Advisor (CAA) was one of 19 initiatives produced at that Summit, held in April 2000. Since then, we've conducted three 5-day CAA orientation courses and now have 82 of the 90 CAAs in the field working for commanders, first sergeants and supervisors to help them boost our retention numbers.

The CAAs should provide the information our supervisors need to help members make well-informed career decisions. CAAs will be available to appear at commander's calls and professional development forums (such as Air-

man Leadership School or the First Term Airman's Center) as well as to conduct unit visits. They're prepared to talk about the benefits of an Air Force career and provide supervisors some of the counseling resources needed for feedback sessions. They serve as a supervisor's focal point for retention information and initiatives. They'll have real time access to AFPC websites loaded with reenlistment data by base, specialty, major commands, and Air Force totals. The same website will allow CAAs to cross-flow installation retention initiatives and glean the same from their counterparts. Our goal is to ensure each Air Force member is fully aware of the many benefits of staying with America's Air Force...and our newly trained CAAs can be a critical link in helping us fulfill this goal.

The CAA will not replace any commander, supervisor or first sergeant functions. They are there to help commanders, supervisors and first sergeants. Use them.

Since the last CAA course wrapped up two months ago, your base CAAs should be in place and visible. Be sure to capitalize upon these senior NCOs by leveraging all the skill, dedication and information resources they bring to the commanders, first sergeants, and supervisors on our installations. Their talents can help us retain our experienced Airmen...the very foundation of our force.

APPROACHES TO CAREER COUNSELING

Team Kadena's Career Advisor

Career counseling can take on many forms. It can be conducted in a formal setting via seminars or scheduled one-

on-one sessions or informally during day-to-day activities. The approach a supervisor takes is normally based on the receiver and the situation.

Supervisors conduct feedback sessions roughly semi-annually as part of the established evaluation system. For the last few years, briefing the Air Force Facts and Benefits Sheet has been a required topic to be incorporated. The fact sheet has been keeping pace with the ongoing changes and has assisted supervisors in delivering key information. Career counseling needs continue.

Benefits of service are only benefits when used. Participating in one of the many programs offered by Services, visiting the Family Support Center to tap into a wealth of information, or investing in your education through tuition assistance programs are very rewarding efforts. Don't allow these and other opportunities go by - use your AF benefits. Encourage your troops and co-workers to join in too.

The "benefits" offered can also enhance ones career. Completing a masters degree program is important for the officer. For the enlisted, the Community College of the Air Force degree becomes a strength for promotions and special duty assignments.

With the growth in cash incentives for joining and staying in our Air Force, the financial and investing information offered by the Family Support Center can be used to make the bonus amount grow in value. By investing smartly, bonus money can help you attain future financial freedom.

Effective communications of existing programs and programs soon to come will allow members to capitalize. Here are some examples:

- SRB rates change each January and July. Be aware of pending rate

changes. You may want to delay your reenlistment, if possible, to get a higher rate. You may want to speed your reenlistment in case the SRB rate is going down. If you are a supervisor, watch the rates for your troops to help them make the "right decision."

- Know the critical dates for airmen making career choices. The career job reservation window is open for a specific time frame. The same goes for retraining window. Know the dates. Being overseas, track the 13-month option window for yourself and your troops. Putting in for the COT or making sure the dream sheet is updated helps members and the assignment system alike.
- Get and give the right answers to all questions or concerns. If you don't know the answer, call the experts. Often, it is very hard to undo a decision made on bad information. Read the local, MAJCOM, and Air Force policies. If something does not make sense, get it clarified. If it still does not make sense or you believe it to be unjust, professionally challenge it. Supervisory assistance, critiques, and suggestion programs work. If your attempts fail, alert your chain of command on what is wrong and what you tried to do to fix it.
- Begin every process at the right place. Most processes start within your squadron whether it be the Commanders Support Staff, your element Information Manager, or through your training NCO. Tap the expertise you have "in-house" first. This simple approach will keep you from getting the "run-around" feeling.

Formal approaches are being made. For the last few months, rosters have been generated and distributed to First Sergeants for all first and second term members within 15 months of separation. This reminder is being sent because it is known most members decide about their future career plans about one year in advance.

At the 13th month prior to DOS, members will be invited to a Right Decision

seminar. The inaugural seminar is planned for February 2001 at the Schilling Recreation Center. This forum will have agency experts from the MPF, Family Support, Services and TRICARE present to brief members, dependants and supervisors on programs and the latest changes in service benefits. The 13th month prior date also is the DEROS option month under the assignment system. Many questions can be answered simultaneously and all will hear it directly from the OPRs. Exact dates will be advertised through Commanders and First Sergeants.

DID YOU KNOW?

Team Kadena's Career Advisor

Did you know the 18th Wing is meeting all retention goals for FY01 and Team Kadena is meeting first and second term goals. The career category is just just 0.4% below goal base wide.

Did you know AF Recruiting efforts are paying big dividends with accessions into the Air Force being +51 for FY01?

Did you know the conversion from REDUX to Top 3 retirement plan begins in Feb 01? When members reach their 15th year of service anniversary date, they will be given a choice to either switch to the Top 3 retirement plan or maintain REDUX. Those electing to maintain REDUX will receive a \$30,000 one time payment for keeping the lower retirement percentage.

Did you know that first term airmen can apply for an OCONUS to CONUS base of preference assignment in conjunction with their reenlistment? This special BOP program is strictly a reenlistment incentive for first term airmen.

Did you know the Education Office can fund a one-time certification course for up to \$7,000? Restrictions do apply but here is an avenue to garner an airframe and powerplant license, computer platform certificate or other job-related

professional certification. See your Education Office today for details.

Did you know military members can extend their leave time at home by assisting an AF Recruiter? Through the Recruiter Assistance Program, military members can enter into non-chargeable leave status to assist in the "We Are All Recruiters" (WEAR) campaign. See your CSS for details.

Did you know that the Department of Veteran Affairs Home Loan Guarantee program was due to expire this year? Congress extended the program until 2004, keeping just a 2 percent funding fee to purchase a home. More information can be found at

<http://www.homeloans.va.gov/>

Did you know the 10 year reenlistment proposal is not dead? The initiative is tied due to the Congressional mandate preventing payment of a selective reenlistment bonus past a members 16th year of service. Air Staff is attempting to resolve the hurdles so this initiative can be adopted.

Did you know Air Staff is also working an initiative to allow members keeping the REDUX retirement plan to defer the \$30,000 payment until the thrift savings plan is implemented? This will allow members to roll a portion of the payment into the TSP and gain some tax advantages.

Did you know about a vacation club designed specifically for the Armed Forces? Visit <http://afvclub.com>.

Career Assistance Advisor
18 WG/CAA
SMSgt Jody Rodarmel
Bldg. #721, Room H-201
634-3337